



## *Senate Press Office*

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### **STATEMENT**

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# Staton files legislation creating Georgia Trauma Commission

**ATLANTA** – State Sen. Cecil Staton (R-Macon) filed legislation today to create the Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission, the group that will oversee the Georgia Trauma Care Fund. Sen. Staton



co-chaired the Comprehensive State Trauma Services Joint Study Committee last year, and the recommendations included the creation of the Commission. All 56 state senators signed the bipartisan legislation.

The Georgia Trauma Care Fund will be reserved for the operation of Georgia's trauma system and Georgia's Office of Emergency Medical Services/Trauma will administer the funds accordingly. Funding options for Georgia's trauma system

*Sen. Cecil Staton (R-Macon) and Sen. Lee Hawkins (R-Gainesville) hold a press conference to discuss the need for a statewide trauma network. Sen. Staton filed legislation today calling for the creation of The Georgia Trauma Care Network Commission.*

*Photo Credit: Senate Press Office*

include a surcharge on motor vehicle registrations, an increase of \$1.16 in the monthly cell phone surcharge and a percentage of the Georgia Insurance Premium Tax that will be diverted into the Georgia Trauma Care Fund. In his State of the State address earlier this month, Gov. Perdue said he wants reckless drivers to pay additional fines for the statewide trauma network.

“Car accidents cause more trauma than any other source,” said Gov. Perdue. “And drivers who travel recklessly at high speeds will be held accountable in Georgia. We will make those drivers pay for a statewide trauma network. This will allow us to not only improve Georgia’s trauma care system, but also reduce the actions that cause pain for so many Georgia families.”

“We need to fund at least 15 additional trauma centers in Georgia,” Sen. Staton said today. “For a state this size, we do not have the ability to care for people who need the care of a level one or level two trauma center, nor do we have adequate transportation.”

Sen. Staton pointed out that in southwest Georgia, there is not a trauma center south of Macon until Thomasville. Additionally, there is not a trauma center anywhere in northeast Georgia.

“These additional trauma centers can save as many as 700 lives each year,” Sen. Staton said, adding that Georgia’s death rate is 20 percent higher than the death rate nationwide because of insufficient trauma centers.

Sen. Staton estimates that Georgia will need \$80 - \$85 million each year to fund the hospitals that partake in the system. Part of the funding will include money for a statewide helicopter system, specifically for trauma transportation. Physicians refer to the first hour after a person is severely injured – most often in a catastrophic automobile accident – as the “golden hour.” This is the hour when people have the best chance of survival and recover if they are given immediate, acute, care.

Once the funding decisions are made by the Commission, which will be made up of nine members – five appointed by the governor and two each appointed by the Lt. governor and the speaker – a constitutional amendment will be placed on the ballot, probably in 2008, to earmark the funds for the trauma centers. The money would then be appropriated in the FY 2010 budget.

“Georgia’s trauma system is in crisis,” Sen. Staton said. “This is the first step toward giving our people a quality trauma system that they can rely on when tragedy arises.”

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*Sen. Cecil Staton of the 18<sup>th</sup> Senate District may be reached at 404.656.5039. He is chairman of the Senate Science and Technology Committee and represents portions of Bibb, Crawford, Houston, Jones and Monroe counties.*